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Britannia Victrix :

OR, THE
TRIUMPHS
OF THE
ROYAL NAVY,
In the late *Victorious Ingagement* with the
FRENCH FLEET

M A Y, 1692.

A Pindarick POEM.

—*Domitosque Herculea manu
Telluris Juvenes, unde Periculum
Fulgens contremuit Domus
Saturnis Veteri.*—

Hor. lib. 2. Ode 12.

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Britannia Victrix :

I.

FOrbear a while, my dearest Friend, forbear,
 With more glad Tidings to regale my ear,
 Least crowding Tales of new Success,
 Which to my Thoughts so fast their Welcome press,
 Should even the Pleasure of the Mind destroy,
 And my Soul sink beneath the mighty Joy ;
 Gently, and by degrees relate,
 The Gallick-Fleet's Inglorious Fate ;
 But let not from thy Lab'ring Tongue,
 So very quick the welcome Accents Throng,
 Tho sweet are all the Tidings of thy Breath,
 I would not be with Roses prest to Death,
 Some Gall in all our Pleasures Fate Distills,
 And Joy wound up too high, too often Kills :
 So when Diagoras of Old,
 Whose three brave Sons had won immortal Fame,
 By Prizes in th' Olympick Game,
 Was by themselves of their good Fortune told,
 When they their Garlands humbly laid
 Upon their Aged Father's Head,
 With such excess of Joy his Blood was Fir'd,
 That in their Arms the Good Old Man Expir'd.

I I.

But yet if ever an excess of Joy,
 Might be allow'd to be no Crime,
 It must be surely at this time,
 A Victory so bravely won,
 And with such Vigour carried on,
 That Neptune did in a full Councel own,
 Since he the Oceans Government had known,
 He never saw such manly Courage shown,
 As did the English when they Fought ;
 And wonder'd by what Magick Spell,
 Which on the Hearts of Frenchmen fell,
 They should in such confusion run,
 And would have Sail'd as quick as Wind and Thought.
 For scarcely was th' Ingagement o're,
 But his Blew Tritans from the Shore,
 Took up the Wrecks from tatter'd Ships did fall,
 Which they in memory of the Day,
 Of the auspicious Conqu'ring M A Y,
 Hung up as Trophies in their Masters watry Hall.

III.

Auspicious Month indeed, from whence we may,
 Of our new Happiness the Æra Date,
 Since all the Storms, which did of late
 So threaten us, are now blown quite away.
 See a most pleasing Scene appears,
 Of Rolling, Smiling, Peaceful Years ;
 When free from War and its Alarms,
 Each shall his Property Possess,
 Under the shade of Welcome Peace,
 Fearless of Forreign and Domestick Harms ;
 For when, (as Poets feign,) Adromeda,
 Chain'd to a Rock, stood still expos'd
 To each Sea-Monster's hungry Jaws ;
 So, but of late Fair Albion lay,
 Till Victory, like Perseus came,
 To Rescue the Afflicted Dame,
 Chas'd the grim Tyrants of the Sea,
 In narrow Creeks to be inclos'd,
 And to the Brittish Ocean gave new Laws

Poets in this, as well as Painters share,
 That what they would attempt to do, they dare,
 But what kind Muse will now my Breast Inspire,
 With Waller's Rapiure, or with Denham's Fire,
 Those Noble Bards did in immortal Verse,
 Some late Sea Fights so movingly Rehearse
 Each line with such new Spirit did they write,
 Readers in fancy might behold the Fight,
 As plain as if with Telescopes they stood
 On shore, and each minutest Action view'd,
 Of warm Engagements on the Purple Flood.

Come then my Muse, and furl thy Fancy's Sail,
 And on the streams of Helicon,
 Launch out with a successful Gale.
 But ah, if in the bold Attempt,
 (As who from chance can be exempt?)
 Thou shouldst in spite of thy Endeavours fail,
 Twill yet of thee, as once of Phaeton
 Be said, altho he was undone
 In guiding Chariot of the Sun,
 Yet for the bare attempt some praise he Won.

Behold, with mighty Pleasure, Muse, behold,
 Those floating Castles of the Sea,
 Impregnable to Guns and Geld;
 Observe the Royal Navy how she Glides,
 And Cuts the Silver Froth of yeilding Tides,
 In proud Procession how they go,
 To meet the Lurking and Absconding Foe;
 For several Leagues they spread their Canvas Wings,
 A goodly sight which mighty pleasure brings,
 With more Majestick Pride they Sail,
 Than the Venetian Fleet by Bucentoro Led,
 When with her mighty Duke she goes
 In pomp the Adriatick Sea to Wed,
 See how they Tide it with a merry Gale,
 While from each Deck is heard the Voice
 Of the loud Trumpets Martial noise,

(4)

A sound which Cowards can inspire,
And in the coldest Breast strike sparks of Fire ;
Hark how the Tritons on the Rocks which dwell,
With pleasure hear the Warlike sign,
And each one winds his Concave shell,
To make the Harmony still more Divine.

VI.

On Quarter Deck (the Post of Honour) stands,
The Hero who the Ship Commands,
With manly Terror on his Brow,
To his Ships Crew he seems to show,
That Danger is a word he does not know :
Nor come the Sailors far behind,
Tho moving in a lower Sphere,
Each has a Brave and Noble Mind,
And scorns to name or think of Fear ;
If one on Board they thought there was,
Who hid a Coward in his Breast,
Quite Over-board they'd throw the Ass,
Least he should prove Infectious to the rest ;
With long Delays they all impatient grow,
And only wish to meet the skulking Foe.

VII.

A Sail, a Sail,— I have a Fleet in ken,
From Top mast Head is heard,— a welcome sound,
Which Echos all the Navy round,
And with new Souls inspires the Men,
Each to his Post in Order Runs,
As chearfully to tend the Guns,
As Shepherd e're at dawn of Day did creep,
O're Verdant Lawns to tend his gentle Sheep.
The Line of Battle Form'd, each ready stands
To wait his Admirals Commands
When he shall Fire, and when to Vere and Turn,
When to break through, and resolutely Burn ;
And tho' a wild Confusion seems to Reign,
On a Ships Deck when Battles near ;
Yet one may plainly see that ev'ry Man,
As little of Disorder knows, as Fear,

With

With spreading Sails they see the threatening Foe
 Approach ; which they as gladly meet,
 As e're did Bridegroom on his Wedding Night,
 Th' Embraces of the Blushing Fair,
 And wish to feel the first Provoking Blow.

VIII.

And now begins the warm Dispute,
 Throwing from sides of Oaken Walls,
 Their Death Denouncing Iron Balls,
 Each other Mortally Salute ;
 See how the shot their Sails and Rigging tears,
 While Splinters thick as Hail,
 More Mischief do than Cannon-Ball.
 Now a Broad side a Ships Deck almost Clears,
 For Bullets no Distinction know
 Between an Admiral and a Common Tar,
 But both promiscuously Bow,
 When it comes whistling through the Air ;
 Down to the shades the Dead in clusters go,
 While on the Deck the Wounded lye,
 And in good earnest wish to Dye,
 Since Life is grown a Burthen now ;
 Now Fate and Death their publick Revels keep,
 And leave the Land a while, to Frolick in the Deep.

IX.

The Goddess Victory at Distance stood,
 And saw the Contest on the Purple Flood,
 (Now Purple grown indeed, with human Blood)
 At last with mighty haste her Course she bore,
 And with her Silver Wings our Navy shaddow'd o're,
 Whilst all the Fleet with Joy the Omen View'd,
 And for her Welcome, loud Discharges Roar ;
 And tho but just before,
 The French with brav'ry kept the Watry Feild,
 Since them does wisht Success forsake,
 Their Cannons now as faint as Echo's speak ;
 Their Petards Languish, their Guns are weak,
 And all Dispirited prepare to Run or Yield.

(6)

X.

But whither, whither, O ye rigid Stars,
For safety shall the *Gallick Fleet* retire
To disappoint 'em, since the *Winds* conspire ;
Homewards their *Course* they cannot steer,
And no kind *Hospitable Harbour's* near ;
No Turkish Bay, nor Creek of Algerine,
Can on the *Brittish Seas* be seen ;
Their *Brethren* of the *Turbant* would
In their *Distress* have helpt them if they could,
But ah, no *Turkish Port* their *Navy* can secure,
The *Dardanells* are far from *Cape Barfleur*.

XI.

Barfleur, a Word vvhich after ages shall
To mind vwith grateful Memory recal,
And lessea much the *Fam'd Report*
Of *Bullogne Seige, Poicteurs, and Argencourt*,
Places where bravely our *Forefathers Fought*,
And home their *Conquering Lawrels* brought,
By much *Barfleur* their *Glory* does out-vy,
Where we obtain'd a greater *Victory*,
Those Battles formerly we won,
Perhaps might shake the *Gallick Throne* ;
But the *Convulsion* soon was o're,
This has done infinitely more,
For novv Determin'd is the *Fate of France*,
Its Ruin fixt, its Doom is Seal'd
Which has for *Ages* been conceal'd,
And all its hopes of *Universal Monarchy*,
Now *Languish* in a dull *Expiring Trance*.

XII.

V.
Their hasty *Flight* my *Muse* does novv Descry,
Like *Parthians* shooting vwhile they run,
Casting a fearful look behind,
Whilst every loud Discharging Gun,
Does only bruise the *Air* and crush the *Wind* ;
Like *trembling Hares* upon a plain they fly,
Double, Redouble and all Courses try
A vvretched Life to save,
They foam vwith *Anger* and vwith fury *Rave*.

They foam with Anger, and with Fury rave,
 In haste they run, and we in haste pursue,
 Cutting with nimble Keels the *Silver Wave* ;
 And tho' they swift as Lightning flew,
 Our Fleet as fast could Sail, since Winds and Waves conspire,
 To further ours, and frustrate their Desire.

XIII.

Too weak alas, are all Attempts of Verse,
Great RUSSELL's Glory to rehearse ; }
 Nor can the nicest Studied Praise,
 Sufficient Trophies to his *Vertue Raise*, }
 A Work deserving Eame and Bays.
RUSSELL a Name, which after times shall Bleſs,
 When they in *Chronicles* shall Read,
 His mighty Actions and his great Succeſs :
 And what against the *Gallick Fleet* he did ;
 Born to revenge his Noble Kinsman's Blood ; *Lord Russell*
 Who to *French Councils* fell a Sacrifice,
 But he has bravely fluc'd a flood,
 Of purple *Gore*, for ev'ry precious Drop of his.

XIV.

Tho the *Illustrious House of Bedford* claims,
 A share of Glory with the first,
 Of all the *English Nobles Names* ;
 And can as many Trophies show,
 Upon her Antient *Arms* and *Crest*,
 As any Warlike Hero's who were Born,
 Their Name and Country to adorn.
 Yet Envy must it self allow,
 Tho dazzling Beams of Light her Orb does fill,
 That by the *Admiral* of the Name,
 (Darling of Victory and Fauie)
 She shines with greater, brighter Lustre still ;
 And sure it is a happineſs,
 Which few great Families does bless,
 But theirs, to whom the mighty Luck does fall,
 To have produc'd a *Martyr* and an *Admiral*.

If Subjects we with *Soveraigns* may compare,
(Tho' we the mighty Difference must allow)

With his Victorious *Prince* does *Russell* share
In all the Hardships and Fatigues of War,
If Heavenly Bodies, as the Learned hold,
Insencibles do move affairs below,
Who without wonder can behold,
A Noble *General* dispence,
Through a vast Camp his warning Influence,
Whilst every Warlike Soldiers Limb,
Seems but to be a part of him.

Just so at Sea, the Sailers one and all,
Each Morning bless their much *Lord Admiral* ;
To doubt of wisht Succels whet Mortal can,
When too such Heroes do the Cause maintain,
Nassau at Land, and *Russel* on the Main.

Hard Fate of Generals in War,
Who scarce doe Nature's common Blessings share,
When our brave *Admiral* all day,
In Fire and Smoke maintain'd the fray,
One would have thought that *Balmy Sleep* at night,
Should his tir'd Sences to repose invite,
But still his Manly Cares deny
Rest to his Thoughts, or Slumber to his Eye ;
But yet behold ! to recompence
The Burthen of his weary Sence,
A Night-piece, *Victory* prepares,
To please his Eyes, and gratifie his Ears.
Three Ships at distance, like three *Meteors* show,
Drest all in Flames from poop to prow,
By Gun-Powder's unlucky Blow,
Whilst the poor Mortals did inhabit there,
By Destinies too rigid Frown,
Are doom'd at once to Burn and Drown,
Thrown up like *Rockets* in the Air,
Then down again into the Deep with wild Despair.

For little Service little Praise is due,
 But if the Thoughts Reverse we view,
 What store of *Lawrels* will not fall,
 Upon the Brows of conqu'ring *Delavall* ;
 For when by winds and *Brittish* Fury chas'd,
 To *Cape de Wyke* the French for shelter got,
 And on that little watry spot,
 Esteem'd themselves secure, and danger past,
 Then the *Vice Admiral of the Red*,
 Came with his Squadren well prepar'd,
 To do whatever Courage dar'd.
 They saw the Skulking Ships in Corners lie,
 As if to move they were afraid ;
 And since the Tide admittance does deny,
 To Ships of Burthen they prepar'd,
 With Boats well Man'd, and Fire-ships to declare
 Defiance to the Enemy :
 See, see, the wish'd desir'd Success,
 Which does their bold endeavour bles.
 Behold, the flames from *Gallick Decks*, which rise
 To *Victory*, a Grateful Sacrifice,
 Whilst Rigid Fate all Succours still denies.

Behold the Glory of their Fleet,
 The *Royal-Sun* now all on flame,
 A most unlook'd for Exit meet,
 While with impatience the gay *Gilded Dame*.
 Views the Incroachments of the Fire,
 Upon her Gallant rich Attire :
 She does with passion rave, with anger weep,
 And as she downward goes,
 Her Hissing Curses throws ;
 Then sinks a Hundred Fathom in the deep,
 The *Heavenly Sun*, when he has run his Race
 About the Globe, yet every welcome Night,
 Plunges in *Thetis* watrey soft embrace,
 Next Morning rising with new Rays of Light,
 But the *French Sun*, once darling of their Eyes,
 Is set, and never never more will rise ;

So vain, short liv'd, and Transitory,
Are all the Pomps and Shows of humane Glory.

XIX.

If he who burnt *Diana's Temple*, stands,
Recorded in the *Book of Fame*,
(The bold Attempt of an inglorious Slave,
That was a Villains Act, but this a brave)
Can be to *Heath* denied a Glorious Name,
Who dar'd to set the *Royal Sun* on Flame;
The *Conquerant* a noble Vessel made,
From Head to Stern, a heap of burning Brands,
With Fury see the Boats invade;
The *Admirable*, who although *she* makes
Some faint resistance of the others Fate partakes;
Fowlis his Ship, deserv'd a better Fate,
(The bold may be unfortunate)
For in the hottest of the Fight,
When Clouds of Smoak made Artificial Night,
He slackned not a Joyn, nor shrank a Nerve,
And though denied his wish'd Succes,
Yet to his Praise this Truth we must confess,
Bravely to dare is bravely to deserve.

XX.

Can nothing scape discerning *RUSSELL's Eye*,
Who sure has got a Writ from Destiny,
The *Gallick Fleet* to overturn,
To Admiral *Rook* he Order gives,
In *Cape le Hogue*, their Ships to burn,
Who the Commission joyfully Receives,
And boldly Ventures on the Enterprize,
Six over night in flames expire,
And Morrows Dawn six more observes on fire,
Whilst *English* do with pleasure see
This *Sea Burnt Offering* made to *Victory*,
A Grateful Morning, and an *Evenings Sacrifice*;
But still to make the Vict'ry more compleat,
With their own Guns the Enemy we beat;
From their Mud Plat-forms, now by Fates Decree,
Successless grown, both by the Land and Sea.

Tell me who can, my *labouring Muse*
Aſſby's and Shovel's Praise refuse ;
Rais'd by a *Prince*, who best their Merits knew,
Who found them always brave, and always true :
To Honour's *Temple* we may truly say,
Desert now only leads the way,
And not as heretofore,
When Interest, Bribes, and blind unthinking chance
Did thousands more than *Worth* advance,
And th' greatest share in Court Preferments bore,
Cautious in Council, they prepare
For all the worst events in War :
But when the *wish'd for Minute* does invite,
And the *loud Cannon* calls to fight,
Fearless of Danger on their Decks they stood,
Ready to Sacrifice their Blood,
For the *best Cause*, and their dear Country's good.

XXII.

Who without Sorrow, and a kind Regret,
Can think of *Daring Carter's Fate*?
Or when he hears how valiant *Hastings dy'd*,
Refuse the Tribute of a Tear,
Fate ev'n in Death would not their loves divide,
Who to each other were in Life so dear,
The Verdant *Lawrels* heretofore,
Which they upon their Temples wore ;
Now since their Deaths appear more fresh and green,
And their brave actions, which before
The World in Whispers only car'd to Name,
Is now become the welcome Talk of Fame,
Who to the World their Daring Acts will tell,
While Sighs and Tears ring out their Funeral Knell.

XXII.

Nor must the *Common Seamen* want their Praise,
Who more than common Bravery show'd,
And by undaunted Courage did express
The Love which their Countries cause they ow'd :

For one and all they firmly stood,
Each free from Cowardise or Fear,
To *Random Shots* expos'd his Bosom bare ;
Like Wall of Brass, and not of Flesh and Blood ;

D

And

And tho' the boisterous Seas,
 Their proper Element for fighting is ;
 Yet when near *Coast of Normandy* they drew,
 And had the Army then in view,
 Impatient of Delays they all implore,
 To try their fortune on the shoar ;
 For flush'd with late succes they did not doubt
 To give the Enemy a total rout,
 But their Commander wisely check'd their Rage,
 Not suff'ring them so rashly to ingage,
 Tho' late Defeats did more Defeats presage.

XXIV.

Heark in loud Consort how the *Trumpets* joyn,
 A grateful sound to hear,
 Which does to ev'ry listning Ear, }
 The welcome *News* of Vict'ry bear ;
 News truly Charming and Divine,
 Which may with Songs supply the *Mighty Nine*,
 Whilst *Fame* with strong and active Lungs,
 Borrows a Thousand Thousand Tongues,
 On *Albion's* happy shores to tell,
 How a French *Fleet* esteem'd invincible,
 To Brittish Rage, a Grateful *Victim* fell.

XXV.

Hail ! Welcome News, with treble welcome *Hail*,
 No little Infant e're was seen,
 The Milk from Breast more greedily to suck in,
 Than we with pleasure catch thy wond'rous tale,
 Suspence that torture of the Mind,
 Long had our Thoughts in doubts dark Cave confin'd,
 Yet hope the gay *Fore-runner of Success*,
 With gladsom smiles would often bles
 Our Anxious Souls until at last,
 We did the *Inscious Banquet* taste,
 Who the exalted pleasure can expres,
 When *Tidings* of a *Victory*,
 Confirm'd by all convincing certainty,
 From dark Suspicions did our Souls Release ;
 The Joys, bles'd Souls *unbodied* feel,
 Tho' far above our pow'r to tell,
 Yet we in part their Mighty Transports guess ;
 By lively *Mirth* which still controls,

And

And keeps her Revels in our Souls,
So great, that words cannot its Love express.

XXVI.

The *thinking States-man*, when the News he hears,
How e're his Thought may be employ'd,
In projects for his Countries good,
Now lays aside the weight of *publick cares*,
And with a Mind unbent, prepares
To share the common Joy, since now
In Mirth to Revel, Stoicks would allow,
The *Plodding Man of Business* too,
Smooths up the wrinckles of his Brow,
Puts on a chearful look, and seems to say,
His Mind shall now keep *Holy-day* ;
The *Rustick* leaves his weary Plough,
And on a Lovely Verdant Green,
Are *Tytirus* and *Phillis* seen,
Dancing with other *Nymphs* and *Swains*,
Forgetting all their Amorous pains,
They trip it o're the Lawns, & frisk upon the Plains.
All Men from high to low degree,
Are fill'd with Mirth and Jollity,
And *Albion* enjoys an *Universal Jubilee*.

XXVII.

Amidst the *Publick Triumphs*, yet appear
Some Angry Looks, and Clouded Brows,
Faces, which Melancholy wear,
And who the wond'rous Riddle knows,
That Discontent should have a Seat,
So near, where all the Sons of Joy are met :
Wonder no more, but pity rather
This envious Crooking Murmuring Brood,
With Hopes uncertain as the Weather,
Foes to their own, and to the *Publick good* :
But let the *Brave and Loyal Heart*,
Insensible of Envy's smart ;
For Mighty Joy allow a mighty Scope,
And still for more and more Successes hope.

XXVIII.

But must the mighty Joy be known,
To *Albion's Happy Land* alone ?
No, No, *Industriots Fame* takes care,

To spread the *Tidings* far and near,
Which does, as diff'rent Intrest guides,
Their Souls with different Passions fill,
And first, with winged speed she glides,

To great *Nassau*, the News to tell,
Whom Heav'n indulgently does bless
In all his actions with a wiſt Succes ;
The welcome News he soon Communicates,
To's Princely *Allies* and *Confederates* ;
Who knowing that the Fortune of their Arms,

Depend upon the Fate of *his* :
Bless the *kind Omen* which alarms,
With Pannick fear, th' Insulting Foe,
Who with a strange Amazement hear
Their ill Succes, in *Naval War*,
Dreading by Land another *Fatal Blow*.

XXIX.

Go on, *Great Prince*, till thy great Actions swell
So very high, that even *Fame*
Shall think't a *Talk almost impossible*,
To after Ages half thy Acts to tell,
But ah ! what *spot of Earth* is there,
Upon this lower Globes *Terrestrial Sphere*,
Which has not heard thy Glorious Name ?
Thou hast a Thousand Actions done,
Which will for ever make thee known,
Whilst *Princes*, who by diff'rent arts have try'd
To purchase *Lasting Fame*, have been deny'd,
And as *irglorius* liv'd, *ingloriously* have dy'd.

XXX.

But whilst abroad he seeks Renown by Arms,
Can we at home forget *Maria's Charms* ? }
Who while her *Royal Consort* shares }
The long Fatigue of Forreign Wars, }
Employs her most Industrious Cares ; }
For *Albion's* safety too too happy Isle,
While on thy Banks such Constelations smile,
But oh how bright will be the Sphere,
When after all the longer fatigues,
Of War and Stratagems close Intrigues :
WILLIAM and *MARY* shall thro' Europe be
Esteem'd the *Arbiters* of Peace and Liberty.

F I N I S.

